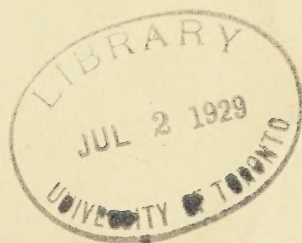


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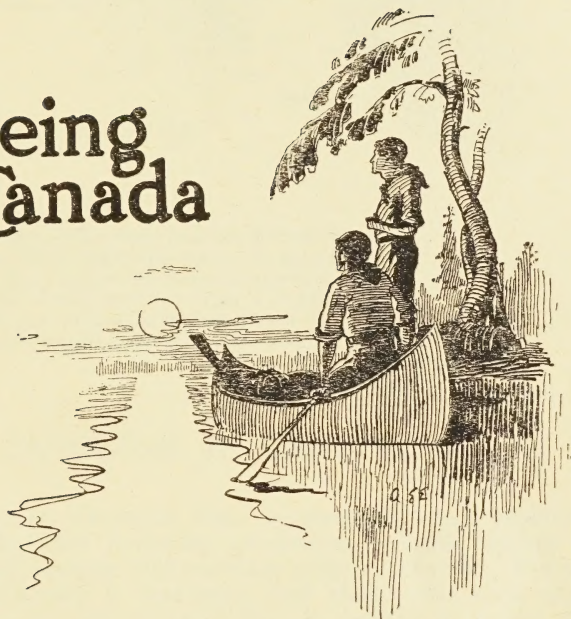
Canoeing *in* Canada




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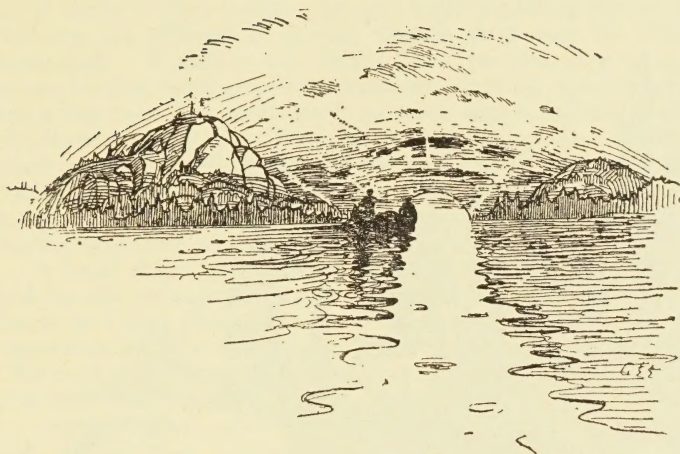
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Canoeing *in* Canada





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All day with steady paddles toward the west
Our heavy-laden long canoe we pressed;
All day we saw the thunder-travelled sky
Purpled with storm in many a trailing tress,
And saw at eve the broken sunset die
In crimson on the silent wilderness.

—Lampman.

CANOEING IN CANADA

EVERY canoeist discovers that a successful trip requires, among the other necessary conditions, suitable waters, a picturesque country and excellent summer climate. For all these features Canada is renowned, and those who have once ventured on its extensive canoe routes are anxious to repeat the delightful experience.

The Canadian rivers and lakes offer an unlimited choice. For hundreds of miles one may travel on any of the great rivers, journeying from lake to lake, portaging where rapids impede, or crossing intervening heights to embark on other streams. Many summers would be necessary to visit even a fraction of these canoe routes.

Having decided upon the kind of trip to be made, whether one requiring much effort and experience, or one quite free from portages and rapids, the route becomes simply a matter of selection.

The history of the Canadian water routes is linked with the fascinating story of the early explorers who, following the streams and lakes, penetrated not only through the eastern forests to Hudson bay, but in the great west and northwest to the Arctic and Pacific oceans. Upon this system of canoe travel was built up the enormous fur trade, the Indians bringing their furs to the trading posts many hundreds of miles from their hunting grounds. It is surprising to know that one may travel by canoe with occasional



portages from the mouth of the Mackenzie river, on the shores of the Arctic ocean, to the Bay of Fundy, a distance of fully 4,500 miles.

Railways and the automobile have provided more rapid means of transport, but the rivers flow on forever, and the mystic charm of silent lakes, the perfumes of the forest, the all-pervading peace, still invite the adventurer to partake of the wonders of nature. But in these busy days the railways are of great service to the canoeist for they have brought the majority of the canoe routes in Canada within easy access. Wherever the visitor crosses the border he has not far to go before "putting in" his canoe. This is particularly true with regard to the average summer

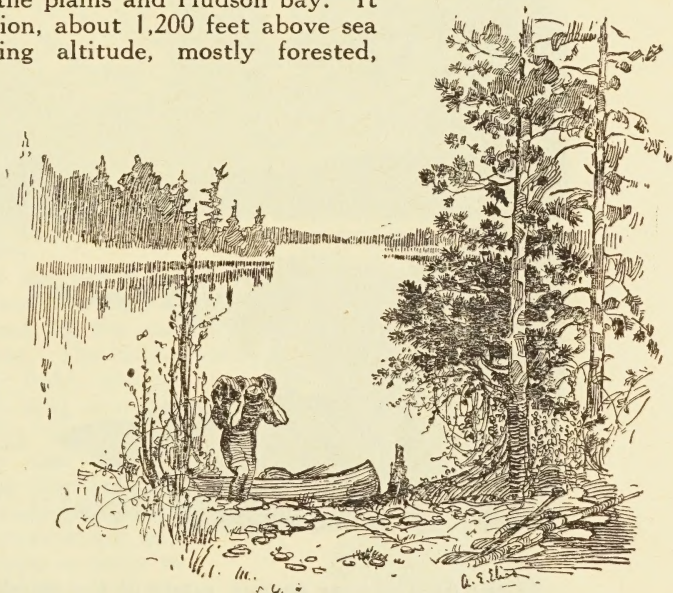


trip of three or four weeks. Longer trips requiring two months or more are not difficult of access, though they may be difficult to accomplish. Within a few hours after leaving any city in the eastern United States one can reach the starting point for a trip to James bay from the east, south or west, and a railway journey of only three or four days from New York brings one to the headwaters of the Churchill, Athabasca, and Peace rivers, the gateway to extensive trips requiring two months or more. It is no longer necessary for the voyageur to paddle a hundred miles before beginning his objective trips to distant parts.

A brief description of the canoeing country shows that it is ideal for the purpose. East of a line drawn from the Lake of the Woods to Great Bear lake in the far northwest, lies the ancient Laurentian plateau, comprising almost the whole of the provinces of Ontario and Quebec, the northern half of Manitoba and the lands between the plains and Hudson bay. It is a rugged region, about 1,200 feet above sea level, of varying altitude, mostly forested, traversed by innumerable rivers, and holding hundreds of lakes of all sizes. There are no prominent mountain chains, but lofty cliffs and heights frequently border the lakes and rivers.

This entire region is by nature adapted to the needs of the voyageur who travels by canoe. Large sections are not suitable for agriculture and here nature remains in its primitive condition. One may follow the streams for a long summer outing and never see a village or dwelling, and yet civilization lies so close at hand that return is easily possible. The unevenness of the surface presents ever-changing and picturesque views of distant heights covered with forest. Waterfalls and rapids, large and small, lakes of singular beauty hidden in the forest, islands covered with pine and spruce trees, surprise one day by day.

Farther west lies the great central plain, where the absence of mountain heights allows the rivers to flow comparatively free from rapids and falls. In some places one may follow the streams for hundreds of miles without encountering obstacles of any kind.



And again, in the farthest west lie the great mountain chains of British Columbia, where the rivers are swift and fierce and some, in part, unnavigable. Yet others, suitable for canoeing, flow in deep mountain valleys through the midst of wonderful scenery.

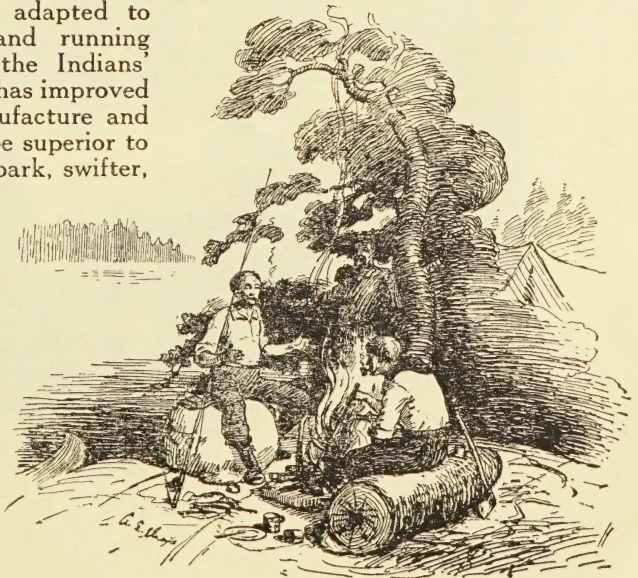
The natural beauty of the Canadian canoe routes is well known to all who have journeyed on these northern waters. The scenery never grows monotonous as one follows the river on its long journey to the sea from lake to lake. Small at first and flowing through the shadows of the forest, with shores of steep, broken cliffs or densely covered with trees, now expanding into lakes of singular beauty dotted with numerous islands providing ideal camp sites to rest the weary paddler, now between steep rocky banks contracting into rapids or waterfalls, the river flows on with silent irresistible force from age to age.



If the time of year permit, many of the rapids on these canoe routes may be safely run with a guide and the toilsome portage avoided. Again, one will encounter rapids which no canoe can run, and then the ancient Indian trail is followed on the portage. Very attractive are most of these forest trails. Narrow paths, marked here and there with a felled white birch, ancient trails followed for centuries by the Indian path-finders, sometimes leading through the dense forest, or through swampy swales, or along the edge of precipitous cliffs, until at last one feels the breeze and emerges from the forest upon the shore of a beautiful lake. The canoe is once more loaded, the journey resumed, while the paddles dip in rhythm to the song of the voyageur, "V'la l'bon vent—v'la l'joli vent."



By means of the canoe alone may access be had to these northern regions, and it is their very remoteness that has preserved their greatest charm, for the crash and roar of the city is unheard in these silent places. The Indian produced in his birch-bark canoe, a craft not only light, strong, swift, easily made and repaired, but one admirably adapted to carrying burdens and running rapids. Following the Indians' lead, the white man has improved the method of manufacture and has produced a canoe superior to the primitive birch-bark, swifter, lighter, stronger—but the original idea of the Indian survives. Buoyant in rough waters, light for portages, a shelter by night if need be, quickly repaired in case of an accident, the canoe remains the ideal craft for



river and lake. Picturesque and romantic, it is the pride and trusty friend of the canoeist who enters the wilds.

One travels far to find the treasures of the north, and not without reward. If the canoeist comes in search of fish, his quest will not be in vain, for the Canadian lakes and streams are famous for their fish. Whatever particular variety of angling one prefers, there is no lack of opportunity. Brook-trout are found in hundreds of streams; lake trout, weighing from fifteen to thirty pounds, are deep down in the cold depths waiting for the copper line; black bass abound along the rocky shores and reefs of these transparent waters, hungry for almost any bait; pickerel, pike, doré, ouananiche, rainbow trout, and other species are abundant in their natural habitats. The skilful angler need never go hungry, and what more appetizing dish can be had than fried trout with a strip of bacon, eaten by the camp fire beneath the shade of a pine tree, while the merry-hearted song-sparrows provide the music.

Beautiful trees are one's constant companions; the sturdy hemlock, the spired black and blue spruces, red and Banksian pines of weird fantastic shape, noble giant white pines, remnants of the ancient forest, and the army of broad-leaved maples, birches, beeches and poplars. Here, resting beneath a pine tree, one may hear the mystic "song of the ages," whisperings of nature's Aeolian harp. At night, when the tempest rages through the pines, the canoeist, lying on his bed of balsam, may listen to the weird moaning of the midnight witches, the lamenting spirits of the Indian.





If the day be beautiful in its blues and greens, its superb pictures and invigorating air, the night is equally beautiful. Then appears the wondrous beauty of the heavens. The silent moon drifts slowly beyond the tree-clad heights, trailing a silver sheen upon the quiet water. Myriads of wonder-lights, sparkling stars and clusters, great constellations, are reflected on the lake's surface. There is blue Vega in the zenith. There is Cassiopeia's chair, the Great Bear, Arcturus, and the brilliant Scorpio with his company of travellers in space.

The shimmering aurora rises on the horizon, for the air is charged with mysterious electrons. Faintly, at first of snowy whiteness, soon the sky becomes aflame with orange and green, flashing, quivering tongues of fire leaping to the zenith. One would come far afield to see the northern lights of Canada.





Rare and beautiful orchids, beds of graceful ferns, delicate twin-flowers scenting the air with exquisite perfume, and even the brilliant Cardinal flower, may be found in unfrequented regions. The sweetest songs of birds are heard, such as sing only in the forests of the north, thrushes, kinglets, warblers, wrens, and hosts of others; and one may see strange birds of utmost interest, the loons, prophets of the weather; the Canada jay, perennial dweller in the north; the great black raven, croaking a warning; or even an eagle, soaring majestically through the great expanse.

The canoeist who has learned the value of travelling through the woods in silence will have encounters with the animals whom he may surprise.

It may be his good fortune to discover a moose or a deer cropping the lily-pads or swimming across a lake, to hear and even see a timber wolf in pursuit of prey, or to see the beaver swimming in the twilight and watch him disappear with loud slap of his tail.

But, perhaps, that which most



attracts the real lover of nature is the spirit pervading the great wilderness—the spirit of rest, silence, and self-sufficient contentment. It is a region where time hardly counts, where the ages come and go in silence and in peace, where all things pursue their course “unaffrighted by the silence round them.”

It is in the remarkable contrast between the conventionality of modern life, its restrictions and demands, and the full naturalness of life in the forests, streams and lakes, that one reaps the greatest benefit from a canoe trip in Canada. The conditions of life in the wilds calls for the development and use of those elemental traits of character which in city life grow atrophied through disuse. The modern canoeist is the replica of the historic voyageur and pioneer.



The priceless rewards for all his toil are steady nerves and hardened muscles, self-reliance and resourcefulness, and that self-poise which faces all emergencies. That keen sense of humour which always sees the ridiculous and laughs at every mishap, is as necessary as the canoe itself. Predisposed thus to exercise the virtue of self-poise, and with a love of nature and adventure, the canoeist cannot fail to enjoy every day.

To one there comes the strong appeal of imagination in following routes of the historic explorer; others find delight in the constant change of beautiful scenery, the forest-clad heights, the rocky

moss-covered cliffs, the varying shades of colour; to others, angling brings enjoyment, or the pleasure of paddling on wind-swept waters—each to his own taste finds treasures in the canoe-land of the north.

And then the trip is not forgotten. Memories of pleasant days and beautiful scenes continually recur to lighten the winter hours and one rejoices to have been

“--- Boon companion to the Day and Night,
Fed on the odors of the summer dawn,
And folded in the beauty of the stars.”

—*Thomas Bailey Aldrich.*

ERNEST VOORHIS.



Maps and details of numerous canoe routes are supplied upon request by the Natural Resources Intelligence Service, Department of the Interior, Ottawa, Canada.



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